REMARKS

Claims 11-30 were previously pending in the application. By this Amendment, claim 13 is amended, and claims 11, 12 and 14-30 remain unchanged.

The change to claim 13 merely corrects a typographical error. The change does not raise any new issues that would require further search and/or consideration. Accordingly, entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 11-14 Are Allowable Over Mahan

The Office Action rejects claims 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Mahan (U.S. Patent No. 4,510,361). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 11 recites a dryer which includes a housing and a rotary drum for receiving laundry. Claim 11 also recites a bearing for rotary mounting of the drum in the housing, where a bracket secures the bearing to the housing. Claim 11 further recites a cooling device for cooling the bearing, the cooling device comprising a cooling air conduit. A process air conduit comprising an air distribution hood is adjacent to the bearing, the hood covering process air inlet holes in the drum. Claim 11 recites that the cooling air conduit is formed between the bracket and the air distribution hood in the form on an annular gap, wherein the gap is formed from the bracket and the air distribution hood.

Mahan discloses a dryer which uses a microwave device for the generation of heat. As shown in Figure 2 of Mahan, the dryer includes a rotary drum 32 mounted in a housing 10. A fan 68 blows air through an auxiliary housing 54 and into a hollow bore 52 of the rotating drum 32. The cylindrical exterior surface of the bore 52, which is identified as a "hub" 40, is mounted on a bearing, the bearing itself being mounted on a bracket 42.

The Examiner has taken the position that the auxiliary housing 54 corresponds to the recited "air distribution hood." Applicant disagrees that this interpretation is proper, as Applicant does not believe that the Mahan dryer

includes an air distribution hood as claimed. But even under this interpretation, claim 11 is not satisfied by the Mahan structure.

Claim 11 requires a process air conduit that comprises the air distribution hood. Because the Examiner has stated that the auxiliary housing 54 is the air distribution hood, presumably the air passing through the auxiliary housing 54 must be the process air. This process air also passes through the hollow bore 52 and a radial passageway 72 before entering the drum 32. This air then exits the drum through the door 22, passes through the apertures 88/90 below the door to a location under the drum 32, and then exits the rear wall of the dryer through the vent 92. Under this interpretation, the process air conduit would include at least the auxiliary housing 54, the hollow bore 52 and the radial passageway 72, all of which act together to deliver process air into the drum.

The Examiner has stated that the cooling air conduit is the radial passageway 72. However, as noted above, the radial passage way 72 is part of the process air conduit, and thus it cannot be the cooling air conduit.

Moreover, claim 11 requires that the cooling air conduit be formed of an annular gap that is located between the bearing bracket and the air distribution hood. Claim 11 further specifies that the recited gap be formed from the bracket and the air distribution hood. Clearly, the radial passageway 72 is not an annular gap located between the bearing bracket 42 and the auxiliary housing 54 (the claimed air distribution hood). Equally clearly, the radial passageway 72 is not formed from the bearing bracket 42 and the auxiliary housing 54, as required by claim 11.

Even if one were to take the position that the hollow bore 52 forms both a part of the process air conduit and is also the cooling air conduit (which Applicant believes is improper), the hollow bore 52 is still not an annular gap formed from the auxiliary housing 54 (the claimed air distribution hood) and the bearing bracket 42. The auxiliary housing 54 and the bearing bracket 42 are mounted on opposite sides of the rear wall of the housing, and no annular gap is formed

between these two parts. Moreover, the hollow bore 52 is a part of the drum itself. Thus, the hollow bore 52 cannot be considered a gap formed from two other elements.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 11 is allowable over Mahan.

Claims 12-14 depend from claim 11 and are allowable for at least the same reasons and for the additional features which they recite. For instance, claim 12 recites that the annular gap is arranged around the bearing. As noted above, it does not appear that Mahan has any annular gap formed from the bearing bracket and the air distribution hood. But even if some portion of the Mahan structure were considered the recited annular gap, that annular gap would not be located around the bearing, as recited in claim 12. It is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are also allowable for these additional reasons.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 11-14 is respectfully requested.

Claims 20, 21 And 24-27 Are Allowable Over Flora

The Office Action rejects claims 20, 21 and 24-27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Flora (U.S. Patent No. 3,060,593). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 20 is directed to a laundry dryer than includes a housing, a drum disposed within the housing, and a bearing supporting the drum for rotational movement with respect to the housing. Claim 20 also recites a process air conduct disposed in the housing including a fan that generates a process airflow within the housing. Claim 20 further recites an air distribution hood directing process air flow from the process air conduit into the drum. A bracket connected to the housing supports the bearing, and an annular gap is disposed between the

bracket and the air distribution hood, the annular gap receiving a cooling air flow of ambient air from outside the process air conduit to cool the bearing.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has taken a position about how the language of claim 20 corresponds to the features of the Flora structure. However, as is explained below, many of the features of the Flora structure cannot correspond to the elements of claim 20 as asserted in the Office Action.

The Office Action asserts that the element identified by reference number 80 in Flora is the claimed bearing supporting the drum for rotational movement. This element is quite clearly not a bearing. Instead, element 80 is the motor mounting housing.

The Office Action also asserts that the element identified with reference number 146 in Flora is the recited "bracket connected to the housing and supporting the bearing." In fact, element 146 is a reinforcing portion which is attached between an output shaft 74 of Flora's elliptical gear assembly and the rotating drum 22 of the dryer. Element 146 cannot be connected to the housing 12, because if it were, the drum 22 would be incapable of rotating.

Claim 20 requires a process air conduit disposed in the housing and including a fan for generating a process air flow. Claim 20 further requires an air distribution hood for directing the process air flow from the process air conduit into the drum. In the Flora structure, the fan is formed from impellers 84/86 that are attached to the motor.

Applicants respectfully submit that Flora lacks an air distribution hood as claimed. But to the extent any portion of Flora could correspond to the claimed air distribution hood, it would be the space formed between the rear wall of the housing 12, and the rear wall of the drum 30 which has apertures therethrough. This portion of the Flora structure directs the process air flow which has been heated by heaters 90 and which is blown by the impellers 86 into the drum 22.

In contrast, the Office Action asserts that the element identified with reference number 118 is the claimed air distribution hood. This portion of the

Flora structure is merely an aperture that allows a cooling air flow of ambient air to enter the rear of the motor and gearing arrangement. Thus, not only does element 118 not properly correspond to the recited air distribution hood, but element 118 would more properly correspond to the recited annular gap.

Even if one were to consider element 118 of Flora to be the recited annular gap for receiving a cooling air flow of ambient air, claim 20 also requires that the annular gap be disposed between the bracket supporting a bearing and the air distribution hood. And element 118 of Flora is clearly not disposed between any air distribution hood (which is the space between the rear wall 12 of the housing and the rear wall of the drum 30) and any bracket supporting a bearing (which in Flora is the elements 80 and 98).

Still further, the Office Action asserts that the element of Flora identified with reference number 78 corresponds to the claimed annular gap that receives a cooling flow of ambient air. Element 78 is an inwardly recessed portion of the rotating drum. Element 78 is most clearly not an annular gap that receives a cooling air flow of ambient air.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that it is impossible to read the language of claim 20 onto the Flora structure. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 20 is allowable over Flora.

Claims 21 and 24-27 depend from claim 20 and are allowable for the same reasons, and for the additional features which they recite.

For instance, claim 26 recites that the annular gap discharges cooling air flow into the air distribution hood. The Office Action asserts that element 78 is the annular gap, and that element 118 is the air distribution hood. Given that interpretation, and the fact that the air flows in the direction of the arrows appearing in Figure 2 of Flora, it would be impossible for air in the "annular gap" 78 to be discharged into the "air distribution hood" 118. In fact, the air would flow in the opposite direction.

Claim 27 recites that the cooling air flow enters the annular gap from a radially outer end and flows radially inward toward the bearing. Clearly, the air flow through the Flora device does not operate in this fashion under the interpretation given in the Office Action. In other words, cooling air does not flow into element 78 (the annular gap) from a radially outer end, and the air does not flow radially inward toward any bearing of the Flora structure.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 20, 21 and 24-27 is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-19 Are Allowable Over Mahan And McCormick

The Office Action rejects claims 15-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mahan, in view of McCormick (U.S. Patent No. 7,752,694). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 15-19 depend from claim 11 and include all of the features of claim 11. As noted above, Mahan lacks all the features recited in claim 11. McCormick fails to cure those deficiencies of Mahan. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 15-19 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above for claim 11.

In addition, claims 15-19 recite additional features which are also not shown in either Mahan or McCormick. For instance, claims 16 and 17 both recite that a section of the process air conduit or the drum are loaded with a vacuum by a conveying action of the fan, and forms a vacuum space, and wherein a cooling air conduit is provided between the vacuum space and the bearing. Neither Mahan nor McCormick disclose these additional features.

For all the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 15-19 is respectfully requested.

Claims 22, 23, 29 And 30 Are Allowable Over Flora And McCormick

The Office Action rejects claims 22, 23, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Flora, in view of McCormick. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 22, 23, 29 and 30 depend from claim 20 and include all the features of claim 20. As noted above, Flora fails to disclose or suggest all the features of claim 20. McCormick fails to cure the deficiencies of Flora. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 22, 23, 29 and 30 are allowable for the reasons discussed above in connection with claim 20, and for the additional features which they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 11-30 is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

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